

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 IO-13 /086 W

-----211143Z 126350 /14

R 210955Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5172

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 1095

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, RP

SUBJECT: MINDANAO CEASEFIRE (SECOND STAGE)

REF: MANILA 800 AND PREVIOUS

BEGIN SUMMARY: GOP AND MNLF HAVE ISSUED STATEMENTS
DECLARING SECOND STAGE OF CEASEFIRE EFFECTIVE JAN 20.
MEANWHILE TRUCE SUPERVISORS HAVE MADE WELL-PUBLICIZED
INITIAL CONTACT WITH HARD-CORE REBELS IN JOLO, WHO AGREED
TO ABIDE BY CEASEFIRE. TRUCE TEAMS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN WORK
IN LANA O AND COTABATO SECTORS SHORTLY. GOP IS ALSO
CONTINUING TALKS WITH EX-REBEL RETURNEES AND ATTEMPTING
TO REASSURE NERVOUS CHRISTIANS IN PROVINCES OF PROPOSED
"AUTONOMOUS" AREA. END SUMMARY.

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1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH TRIPOLI AGREEMENT (WHICH SPECIFIED
THAT MINDANAO CEASEFIRE SHOULD "COME INTO EFFECT" ON

JAN 10) BOTH GOP AND MNLF ISSUED STATEMENTS CALLING FOR
COMPLETE HALT TO HOSTILITIES THAT DATE. (GOP CLAIMS TO
HAVE IMPLEMENTED UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE ON DEC 24.) MNLF
STATEMENT TAPED BY NUR MISURARI AND BROADCAST TO REBELS,

WHILE ADMIRAL ESPALDON (TOP MILITARY COMMANDER IN SOUTH)
DID THE HONORS FOR GOP.

2. TRUCE SUPERVISORS FROM ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AND MNLF
LEFT MANILA FOR SOUTH AS SCHEDULED ON JAN 17. SINCE THEN
THEY HAVE MET WITH REBELS (REAL AND PHONY) AND OTHER
MUSLIM LEADERS IN JOLO AND ZAMBOANGA. IN JOLO HEAD MNLF
DELEGATE THAM MANJOORSA ACCOMPANIED BY PC ZONE COMMANDER
GIDAYA MADE DRAMATIC INITIAL ENCOUNTERS WITH HARD-CORE
TAUSUG FORCES LED BY USMAN SALI AND BIAN LAY LIM WITH
'ACCORDING PRESS) 800 AND (AT LEAST) 2,000 FOLLOWERS
RESPECTIVELY. THESE AND OTHER JOLOANO REBELS REPORTEDLY
PLEDGED TO ABIDE BY CEASEFIRE BUT PRESS ACCOUNTS MAKE
CLEAR THEY DID NOT RPT NOT GIVE UP ARMS (AND NOTED THAT
SCATTERED "BANDITS" KEPT ON SHOOTING DURING SALI-
MANJOORSA MEETING). MNLF/IC TEAMS ARE SCHEDULED TO
CONTINUE SIMILAR ACTIVITIES IN COTABATO AND LANA O
AREAS BEGINNING JAN 21. MEANWHILE PRESS REPORTED THAT
HEAD OF IC DELEGATION, KASSEM ZUHERI OF MOROCCO,
RETURNED TO JIDDA JAN 20 TO PREPARE FOR NEXT ROUND OF
TALKS IN TRIPOLI.

3. GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO HOLD MEETINGS WITH
RETURNEE GROUPS NOW LUMPED IN SO-CALLED "MORO REFORM
LIBERATION MOVEMENT" (MRLM). UNDERSECRETARY
BARBERO ASSURED MRLM GATHERING IN ZAMBOANGA THAT "FUTURE
AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT" NOT INTENDED FOR MNLF, MRLM, OR
ANY OTHER SINGLE GROUP, MUSLIM OR NON-MUSLIM, BUT FOR
ALL PEOPLE IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES. AT SAME TIME LOCAL
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GOVERNMENT SECRETARY RONO HAS ALSO BEEN ON THE ROAD TO
REASSURE NERVOUS CHRISTIANS. HE BEGAN WITH STOP IN
PALAWAN WHERE BACKLASH AGAINST WHAT MANY FEAR IS
TO BE MUSLIM STATE COULD BE PARTICULARLY INTENSE.

4. ACCORDING PRESS REPORT ONE GENUINE REBEL (USMAN
SALI) ASKED THAT "RETURNEES" BE STOPPED FROM HARASSING
PEACE-LOVING PEOPLE OF OLO AND SAID THEY HAD BEEN
SPREADING LIES ABOUT MNLF. ACCORDING MUSLIM OFFICIAL
IN DFA WHO HAS BEEN MEETING WITH RETURNEE (MRLM) GROUPS,
THEY ARE GENUINELY AFRAID OF BEING CUT OUT OF GOP-MNLF
SETTLEMENT. HE ALSO GRANTED THAT MARCOS MAY HAVE
CREATED MRLM AS DEVICE WHICH BY ARTICULATING
CONTRADICTORY "DEMANDS" WILL ENABLE GOP TO WRIGGLE OUT
OF AGREEMENT WITH MNLF, SHOULD THAT SEEM DESIREABLE.

5. COMMENT: IT IS TOO SOON TO TELL WHETHER SECOND STATE
OF CEASE FIRE WILL HOLD BETTER THAN FIRST. IN ANY CASE
MANILA PUBLIC HAS BEEN TREATED TO FRONT-PAGE EVIDENCE

OF REBEL STRENGTH (AT LEASE 3,000 HEAVILY ARMED MNLF
MEN HAVE REPORTEDLY TAKEN PRT IN JOLO MEETINGS ALONE,
ALTHOUGH GOP HAS UNTIL RECENTLY CLAIMED THAT MNLF HAS
ONLY 1-2,000 IN ALL OF MINDANAO AND SULU).
SULLIVAN

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